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for settlement, except the Endeavour River. With all its disadvantages, its position—nearly central between the two places before named—and being so near to the tracks of ships passing by the inner route, must, I think, give it a preference. Its situation, also, in respect to the country, reputed to be pasturable, on the heads of the Mitchell River, and also near the Kennedy River and Princess Charlotte Bay, would be convenient.

Having read the evidence given before the committee for the steam postal communication through Torres Straits, it appears to me that if it is the determination of the Queensland Government to establish a line by the inner passage, it will be indispensable that marks and beacons, and perhaps lights, should be placed at many points along the route. It will, of course, be necessary that such marks and beacons should have continual attention, to see that they are not displaced or destroyed. This duty could be best performed from stations along the coast; and, as the most intricate part of the navigation of the inner passage, and that most requiring marking, lies between the Endeavour River and Booby Island—a distance of 400 miles—I think that no two more convenient places than the Endeavour and Somerset could in the first instance be selected for such stations.

I would here suggest that much valuable information on the subjects connected with the navigation inside the Great Barrier Reef might be obtained from Mr. C. Edwards, of Sydney, who, for a number of years past, has been, and still is, engaged in bêche-de-mer fishing on the islands and coral-banks of these seas, and than whom, I believe, no one is better acquainted with the tides, currents, winds, and all matters affecting their navigation; and also from Mr. Hayman, master of the *Salamander*, who has had the experience of several passages between Brisbane and Somerset.

Situated about 6 miles to the southward of the Endeavour River is the entrance of another stream, an opportunity of examining which will be afforded me on the return of the *Salamander*, and the result of which I will communicate.

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### 3. *Exploration of Annan and Esk Rivers, near Cape York, Australia.*

By JOHN JARDINE, Esq., Police Magistrate, Somerset, Cape York.

On the 11th November, 1865, the *Salamander* anchored off an opening in the coast formed by the entrance of two streams about midway between Monkhouse and Walker points. The afternoon of the same day was occupied by me in examining the southern stream. At the entrance it had a width of 100 yards. After following what appeared to be the main channel for upwards of four miles through extensive mangrove-flats, and passing the entrances of numerous minor branches, joining on each side, the passage became so narrow that the oars touched the bushes on either bank; I therefore returned to the entrance, when, on ascending a peaked hill of considerable height, and which I have marked as "Quartz Peak," from the large blocks of quartz which form its top, a good view was obtained of the course of the southern stream, which I have marked the Esk. The upper portion appeared to drain an open valley of considerable extent, and extending in a north-westerly direction.

The northern stream—which I should wish to name the Annan—was also distinctly seen running for a long distance to the north-eastward through a wide valley, and apparently taking its rise in the main coast range. This river, although marked in the chart "rivulet," is fully entitled to the greater term, while the country through which it ran presented so favourable an appearance that I determined on examining it, as far as possible, on the following day. Accordingly, a boat and crew having been kindly placed at my disposal by

Commander Yonge, R.N., accompanied by my son, I entered the river at low water, and went up with the tide.

At the entrance the river is half a mile wide, gradually lessening for 3 miles to 300 yards. In the next 2 miles it narrows to 100 yards; and for the next 6 miles has an average width of 60 yards. The shallowest water is 5 to 6 feet. The general course for 10 miles is N.E. by N., when a spur from the main range, forming the watershed between this river and the Endeavour, turns it to the north-west, in which direction the features of the country lead me to believe that it continues to its source.

As it was late in the day I turned back, after having followed the course of the river 12 miles, or in a direct line from the sea 6 miles. The character of the country on the banks of this river fully realized the expectation formed on the view of it from Quartz Peak. The subsoil is generally a dark red clay, with a considerable depth of light vegetable mould about it. The grass and herbage is good. The timber chiefly blood-wood and white box. Small alluvial flats by the river are covered with the usual vine-scrub. On the left bank, about half a mile from the river, is a watercourse with good water-holes, evidently permanent, as even in this dry season they were well filled, and contained quantities of fish. The usual water-mark was at least 6 feet above the present level. The ship was reached at dusk.

On the next day, I examined the north side of the entrance for fresh water, which was found in permanent pools at a short distance from the beach, about midway between the entrance and Monkhouse Point. The land here is light and sandy, but well grassed. The general formation is granitic, with occasionally large masses of quartz.

An examination of the entrance by the Master of the *Salamander* proved it to be intricate, accessible only by a narrow and winding channel, with from 4 to 6 feet of water at low tide. Inside the entrance, however, there is deep water, which continues for some miles up the river. Had the Annan the advantages of the Endeavour at its entrance, I should give it a preference as a site for a settlement; as it is, however, it cannot be recommended as a port.

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